

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03865 111527Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3865

EXDIS

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT LE
SUBJ: CRISIS IN LEBANON: DISCUSSION WITH SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR

1. CALLED ON SAUDI AMBASSADOR ALI AL-SHA'ER MORNING
JULY 11 FOR REVIEW OF SITUATION AND TO INQUIRE ABOUT NATURE
OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN SAUDI FONMIN PRINCE SAUD AND SYRIANS.
BRIEFED SHA'ER ON OUR OWN EFFORTS AND HAD A FRANK DISCUSSION
OF LOCAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS. SHA'ER HAD FOLLOWING COMMENTS
OF INTEREST.

2. EMIR SAUD HAD SUMMONED HIM TO RIYADH URGENTLY LAST WEEK
TO SAY SAUDIS WERE ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN SYRIAN
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MURDER OF CHRISTIANS IN BEIRUT AND SHA'ER WAS TO RETURN
TO BEIRUT AND TELL LEBANESE THAT IF SAUDIS COULD NOT BE
KEPT OUT OF SUCH FIGHTING THEY WOULD WITHDRAW. SHA'ER HAD
TALKED EMIR SAUD OUT OF DECISION TO WITHDRAW TROOPS AND
SAID HE THOUGHT HE COULD WORK THINGS OUT ON THE GROUND HERE.
HE HAD GIVEN SAUD LONG BRIEFING ON SITUATION HERE AND TOLD
HIM THE KEY TO THE PROBLEM WAS IN DAMASCUS.

3. SHA'ER DID NOT KNOW WHAT MESSAGE SAUD HAD TAKEN TO DAMASCUS, WHETHER IT WAS ONE SUGGESTING A PROGRAM OF JOINT ACTION OR WHETHER IT WAS MERELY AN APPEAL FOR RESTRAINT. HE NOTED THAT SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS HAD ONLY ONE CARD TO PLAY AND THAT WAS THE ECONOMIC ONE. UNFORTUNATELY GIVEN SAUDI CHARACTER THEY COULD NOT PLAY IT IN A ROUGH OR THREATENING MANNER. THEY HAD TO BE POLITE AND THIS AFFECTED THEIR LEVERAGE.

4. I ASKED SHA'ER WHETHER HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PRACTICAL TO HAVE A REDUCED ARAB SUMMIT TO RESTART MOVEMENT TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AND RIYADH DECISIONS ON LEBANON. SHA'ER SAID PROBLEM WAS SYRIANS DID NOT WANT TO ARABIZE THE PROBLEM. THEY WANTED TO KEEP IT TO THEMSELVES. HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD OPPOSE SUCH A MOVE AND NOTHING COULD BE DONE WITHOUT THEM.

5. NOTE. SHA'ER IS CONVINCED SYRIANS ARE TRYING TO TAKE OVER LEBANON. MANY RESPONSIBLE LEBANESE AND MANY OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES SHARE THIS SUSPICION. THEY CAN ALL DRAW UP A PRETTY PLAUSIBLE BILL OF PARTICULARS TO SUPPORT THEIR CONTENTION, STARTING WITH SYRIAN INTERFERENCE IN LOCAL POLITICS AND THEIR STRONG-ARM TECHNIQUES AT TIME OF SARKIS' ELECTION. I HAVE TENDED TO DISMISS THESE CLAIMS AND TO DEFEND
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THE PURITY OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS BECAUSE I HOPE SYRIANS CAN BE BROUGHT AROUND TO ASSUMING A RESPONSIBLE ROLE VIS-A-VIS THE PALESTINIANS. THE MORE I TALK TO PEOPLE, HOWEVER, THE MORE I WONDER WHETHER I AM BEING NAIVE.
PARKER

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